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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION US-CHINA-LATIN AMERICA US  
IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION ITALIAN ELECTIONS US-VENEZUELA  
US-ECUADORIAN FTA ARGENTINE ECONOMY MINISTER TO  
WASHINGTON 04/11/06

#### 11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's key international stories include US Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon's upcoming trip to Beijing;

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immigrants' demonstrations throughout the US;  
nationalist Ollanta Humala leading the count for Sunday's presidential election; conservative Silvio Berlusconi locked in a battle for power with center-left challenger Romano Prodi; the USG warning Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez; the obstacles faced by the US-Ecuador FTA; Argentine Economy Minister Miceli's upcoming trip to Washington; and French President Chirac surrendering to protesters by discarding a youth employment measure that had spurred nationwide unrest.

#### 12. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "The 'Chinese' danger in Latin America"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" carries an opinion piece by Andres Oppenheimer, who writes (04/11) "When US Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs Thomas 1A. Shannon arrives in China this week to hold a series of meetings with his counterpart in Beijing, he will likely convey a subtle message - not to undermine Latin America's democratic consensus. Will China act accordingly?

"... The US State Department does not see China as a threat in Latin America but rather as a country with fabulous growth that desperately needs raw materials to maintain its growth rates. According to this line of thought, China is so absorbed by its own domestic needs that it does not have energy to launch itself to political adventures in other corners of the world.

"For its part, the Department of Defense fears that China could turn into the main source of military training in the region, partly due to a recent US law banning military aid for countries that authorize the arrest of US citizens to be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court. According to the US Pentagon's officials, Washington should also focus on China's intelligence and cybernetic war activities in the region.

"... My conclusion is that the Bush administration noticed that, in addition to having increased its imports from Latin America by 600% during the last five years, having invested roughly one billion dollar per year in the region and having sent tens of military missions for training purposes to Latin American countries, China has recently obtained the observer status at the OAS, and it is seeking to play a similar role at the IDB.

"I would not be surprised if the Bush administration wanted to draw a line to make sure that China does not become an extra-regional source of military support for anti-US, radical governments in the region, just like Venezuela (such as the soviet Union did with Cuba).

"China is likely to appease Shannon... China's main political interest in Latin America is preserving stability to prevent disruptions in its raw material supply. And as the US second trading partner, after Canada, China does not have much to win by unleashing a confrontation between Washington and Latin America. The US should not be worried, at least for now."

- "Immigrants' claims flooded US cities"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (04/11) "... Demonstrators flooded more than 100 US cities, in which organizers termed 'the largest immigrants' mobilization in the history of the US.' They dream of forming a new social movement in the event the US Senate delays the immigration debate due to November's legislative elections.

"... US President George W. Bush defended demonstrators, but he was cautious not to reveal his

view. He said, 'The good thing about democracy is that people can express themselves,' and he hardly defined demonstrations as 'a signal of an important issue over which people have strong feelings.' Immigrants' groups in North Carolina and Dallas, Texas confirmed that the labor and economic boycott scheduled for May 1 is a way to show the impact of immigrants on the economy."

- "A country which is broken in two and which has a big challenge - governance"

Elisabetta Pique, Rome-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (04/11) "Beyond the fact that it is a deeply divided country, if something was clear after the ambiguous outcome of yesterday's legislative elections is that the new election laws... will pose serious problems for governance.

"... The country is divided in two and this was reflected in the outcome of Sunday's election. But, also, the one who becomes the new PM will not only have to confront his allied partners, who will want their own space, but will have to face a very serious economic situation.

"With practically no growth achieved during recent years, a gigantic public debt, declining competitiveness and productivity, Italy is considered Europe's 'ailing country'.

"It is clear that, regardless of election promises, whoever takes the country's reins, will have to implement structural and unpopular reforms requiring not only congressional majority but a consensus of public opinion. And, under these circumstances, governance does not seem easy."

- "The US warns Hugo Chavez"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" reports (04/11) "The USG warned Venezuela that there could be 'serious diplomatic consequences' between the two countries if harassment and attacks against US Ambassador to Caracas William Brownfield persist.

"During a press conference, the USG spokesperson, Sean McCormack, said 'The Venezuelan government should act according to its duties under the Vienna Convention and help provide protection to our diplomats.'

"... McCormack added that 'the Venezuelan ambassador to Washington's ability to move within the US could be seriously limited.'"

- "Ecuador, further from an FTA with the US"

Business-financial, center-right "InfoBae," reports (04/11) "Ecuadorian Foreign Trade Minister Jorge Illingworth acknowledged that the amendment to the Hydrocarbon Act and a possible judicial ruling against the US corporation Occidental (Oxy) could complicate the scenario for a US-Ecuadorian FTA.

"... In this framework, Illingworth acknowledged that the two cases could hinder the negotiation of an FTA, which began in 2004 and is in its final stage."

- "Miceli will meet with the IMF and US Treasury Department authorities"

Juan Cerruti, columnist of business-financial "El Cronista," writes (04/11) "Economy Minister Felisa Miceli will make her most important tour since she took over. She will visit Washington April 20 to participate in the IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings.

"She will meet with IMF head Rodrigo Rato, US Treasury Secretary John Snow and World Bank head, Paul

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Wolfowitz. These three are the most powerful representatives of the world's financial scenario.

"During the Spring Meetings, Miceli will insist on the need to recast the IMF's role and that of international lending institutions to bring them closer to the real needs of emerging market countries.

She will ask for loans for the productive sectors of countries and will also ask authorities to put an end to macroeconomic conditionality imposed by multinational lending agencies."

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